

UNITY IN CHRIST

NO. 668

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JANUARY 7, 1866,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

John 17:20-21.

FOR several years I have thankfully received the text of the first Sabbath in the year from a venerable clergyman of a parish in the suburbs of our city. Spared by a gracious Providence, my good brother has sent me with his Christian salutations these two verses for my subject. I can only hope that as we have enjoyed together for several years a true communion of spirit in the things of God, until one or the other of us shall be taken up to dwell above we may walk together in holy service, loving each other fervently with a pure heart.

The most tender and touching prayer of the Master contained in this chapter opens up to us His inmost heart. He was in Gethsemane, and His passion was just commencing, He stood like a victim at the altar, where the wood was already laid in order and the fire was kindled to consume the sacrifice, lifting up His eyes to heaven, with true filial love gazing upon His Father’s throne, and resting in humble confidence upon heaven’s strength, He looked away for a moment from the strife and resistance unto blood which was going on below. He asked for that upon which His heart was most fully set. He opened His mouth wide that God might fill it.

This prayer, I take it, was not only the casual expression of the Savior’s desire at the last, but is a sort of model of the prayer which is incessantly going up from Him to the eternal throne. There is a difference in the mode of its offering, with sighs and tears He offered up His humble suit below, but with authority He pleads enthroned in glory now, but the plea is the same, that which He desired while still below, is that which His soul pants after now that He is taken up and is glorified above.

It is significant, beloved, that the Savior should in His last moments not only desire the salvation of all His people, but should plead for the unity of the saved ones, that being saved they might be united. It was not enough that each sheep should be taken from the jaw of the wolf, He would have all the sheep gathered into one fold under His own care. He was not satisfied that the members of His body should each of them be saved as the result of His death, He must have those members fashioned into a glorious body. Unity lying so very near the Savior’s heart at such a time of overwhelming trial must have been held by Him to be priceless beyond all price. It is of this unity that we shall speak this morning—on this wise, first of all, we will have a *little to say upon the unity desired*, then *upon the work necessary*—namely, that the chosen be gathered in, thirdly, *upon prayer offered*, fourthly, *upon the result anticipated*, and fifthly, *upon the question suggested*.

I. First, then, UPON THE UNITY DESIRED.

These words of the Savior have been perverted to the doing of a world of mischief. Ecclesiastics have fallen asleep, which, indeed, is their ordinary condition, and while asleep they have dreamed a dream—a dream founded upon the letter of the Savior’s words, of which they discern not the spiritual sense. They have proved in their own case, as has been proved in thousands of others, that the letter kills, and only the Spirit gives life. Falling asleep, I say, these ecclesiastics have dreamed of a great confederation, presided over by a number of ministers, these again governed by superior officers, and these again by others, and these topped at last by a supreme visible head who must be either a person or

a council, this great confederacy, containing within itself kingdoms and nations, and becoming so powerful as to work upon states, to influence politics, to guide councils, and even to gather together and to move armies.

True, the shadow of the Savior's teaching, "My kingdom is not of this world," must have caused an occasional nightmare in the midst of their dream, but they dreamed on, and what is worse, they turned the dream into a reality, and the time was when the professed followers of Christ were all one, when looking north, south, east, west, from the center at the Vatican, one united body covered all Europe. And what was the result? Did the world believe that God had sent Christ? The world believed the very opposite. The world was persuaded that God had nothing to do with that great crushing, tyrannous, superstitious, ignorant thing which called itself Christianity, and thinking men became infidels, and it was the hardest possible thing to find a genuine intelligent believer north, south, east, or west.

All professors were one, but the world believed not, the fact being that this was not the unity which Jesus had so much as thought of—it was never His intention to set up a great united body to be called a church which should domineer and lord everywhere over the souls of men, and comprehend within its ranks, kings, princes and statesmen who might be worldly, ungodly, hateful, sensual, devilish. It was never Christ's design to set up a conscience-crushing engine of uniformity, and so the great man-devised machine when it was brought to perfection, and set to work with the greatest possible vigor, instead of working out that the world should believe that the Father had sent Christ, wrought out just this, that the world did not believe anything at all, but became infidel, licentious, and rotten at the core, and the system had to be abated as a common nuisance, and something better brought into the world to restore morality.

Yet people dream that dream still, even good people do so. The Puritans, after they had been hunted and haled to prison in this country, fled to New England, and no sooner had they seated themselves upon the shore than they began to say, "We must all be one, there must be no schism," and the big whip was brought out for the Quaker's back, and the manacles for the Baptist's bleeding wrists, because these men, somehow or other, would not be one after this kind of fashion, but would think for themselves and obey God rather than man.

Nowadays Dr. Pusey dreams that the Anglican and the Russian Church may be united, and then perhaps the Romish may chime in, and so once more all may be one. A mere dream! A mere chimera of a kindly but whimsical brain! If it should ever come to be a reality it would prove to be a upas tree, at the roots of which every honest man must at once lay his axe.

But what did the Savior mean, "That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me"? We must begin at the beginning. *What were the elements of this unity which Christ so anxiously desired?* Answer very distinctly is given us in this chapter. The unity was to be composed of the people who are here called "they," "that *they* all may be one." Will you let your eye run down the chapter to see who they are? Look in the second verse, "That he should give eternal life to as many as you have given Him." The unity then proposed is of persons specially given to Jesus by the Father. Not then of all men who happen to dwell in any particular province, district, or city, but a unity of persons who have received, not common life as all have, but life eternal. Special persons, then, who have been quickened by God the Holy Ghost, and have been brought into vital union with the person of the Lord Jesus are to be one.

Further, they are described in the sixth verse as persons to whom God's name has been manifested, people who have seen what others never saw, and have beheld what others cannot know. They are men given out of the world, so the verse tells us—chosen men, taken out from the ordinary mass—not, then, the mass, not kingdoms, states, empires, but selected persons. They are persons who have been schooled, and have learned unusual lessons, "Now they have known that all things whatsoever you have given me are of you," and they have learned their lesson well, for we find it written, "They have kept your word; they have believed that you did send me."

They are described in the ninth verse as being prayed for by Christ, in a sense in which He never prays for the world at all. They are people, according to the tenth verse, in whom God is glorified, in

whom the name of Jesus shines with resplendent luster. Look the whole chapter through, and you will discover that the unity which the Master intended was that of chosen persons who by the Holy Spirit conferring life upon them are led to believe in Jesus Christ, they are spiritual-minded men, who live in the realm of spirit, prize spiritual things, and form a confederacy and a kingdom which is spiritual and not of this world. Here is the secret.

Carnal minds hear that Jesus is to wear a crown of pearls, they find pearls in shells, they try to join the oyster shells together, and what a strange thing they make! But Jesus will have no union of the shells, the shells must be struck off as worthless things, the jewels and the jewels only are to be joined together. It is rumored that the King is to wear a crown, and that pure gold is to form that brilliant circlet, straightway men bring their huge nuggets, and would fashion the diadem of masses of rock, earth, quartz, and I know not what. But it must not be, the King wears no such crown as that, He will refine the gold, He will melt away the earth, the crown is to be made of the pure gold, not of the material with which that gold happens to be united.

The one church of God, of what is it composed then? Is it composed of the Church of England, the Congregational Union, the Wesleyan Conference, and the Baptist body? No, it is not. Is not then the Church of England a part of the church of Christ, and the Baptist denomination a part? No, I deny that these bodies, as such, unrefined and in the gross, are a part of the great unity for which Jesus prayed, but there are believers united with the Church of England who are a part of the body of Christ, and there are believers in all denominations of Christians, ay! and many in no visible church at all, who are in Christ Jesus, and consequently in the great unity. The Church of England is not a part of Christ's true body, nor any other denomination as such, the spiritual unity is made up of spiritual men, separated, picked out, cleared away from all the mass with which they happen to be united.

I have spoken very boldly perhaps, and may be misunderstood, but this I mean, that you cannot take out any visible church, however pure, and say that as it stands it belongs to the spiritual unity for which Jesus prayed. There are in the visible churches a certain number of God's elect ones, and these are of the body of Jesus Christ, but their fellow professors, if unconverted, are not in the mystical union. Christ's body is not made up of denominations, nor of presbyteries, nor of Christian societies, it is made up of saints chosen of God from before the foundation of the world, redeemed by blood, called by His Spirit, and made one with Jesus.

But now, passing on, *what is the bond which keeps these united ones together?* Among others, there is the bond of the *same origin*. Every person who is a partaker of the life of God has sprung from the same divine Father. The Spirit of God has quickened all the faithful alike. No matter that Luther may be very dissimilar from Calvin, Luther is made and created a new creature in Christ Jesus by that same fiat which created Calvin. No matter that Juan de Valdes, in the same age, may hide himself in the Court of Spain, and scarcely be recognized as a believer, yet when we turn over his volume today, we find in his, "*One Hundred Considerations*," the very same spirit of grace which breathes in Calvin's "*Institutes*," or in Luther's "*Bondage of the Human Will*," and we discover there the same life in each—they have been quickened by the same Spirit, and made to live by the same energy, and though they knew it not, they were still one.

Nay more, all true believers are supported by the *same strength*. The life which makes vital the prayer of a believer today, is the same life which quickened the cry of a believer two thousand years ago, and if this world shall last as long as another thousand years, the selfsame Spirit which shall make the tear trickle from the eye of a penitent then, is that which this day makes us bow before God Most High. Moreover, all believers have the *same aim* and objective. Every true saint is shot from the same bow, and is speeding towards the same target. There may be, there will be much that is not of God about the man, much of human infirmity, defilement and corruption, but still the inward spirit within him which God has put there, is forcing its way to the same perfection of holiness, and is meanwhile seeking to glorify God.

Above all, the *Holy Spirit*, who indwells in every believer, is the true fount of oneness. Quaint, queer, strange bodies, some of the Christians were in this land of ours two hundred years ago, strangely different in outward manners from their brethren of 1866, but when we talk with them through their old folios and octavos, we find, if we be the Lord's people, that we are quite at home with them. Though the manifestation may vary, yet the same Spirit of God works the same graces, the same virtues, the same excellences, and thus helps all saints to prove themselves to be of one tribe.

I meet an Englishman anywhere in the wide world over, and I recognize in him some likeness to myself, there is some characteristic or other about him by which his nationality is betrayed, and so I meet a Christian five hundred years back in the midst of Romanism and darkness, but his speech betrays him, if my soul shall traverse space in one hundred years to come, although Christianity may have assumed another outward garb and fashion, I shall still recognize the Christian, I shall detect the Galilean brogue still, there will be something which will show to me that if I am an heir of heaven I am one with the past and one with the future, yea, one with all the saints of the living God.

This is a very different bond from that which men try to impose upon each other in order to create union. They put straps around the outside, they tie us together with many knots, and we feel uneasy, but God puts a divine life inside of us, and then we wear the sacred bonds of love with ease. If you get the limbs of a dead man you can tie them together, and then if you send the body on a journey and the carriage jolts, a leg will slip out of its place, and an arm may be dislocated, but get a living man, and you may send him where you will, and the ligatures of life will prevent his dropping asunder. In all the truly elect children of God who are called, and chosen, and faithful, there is a bond of divine mysterious love running right through the whole, and they are one and must be one, the Holy Ghost being the life which unites them.

There are tokens which evidence this union, and prove that the people of God are one. We hear much moaning over our divisions. There may be some that are to be deplored among Ecclesiastical confederacies, but in the spiritual church of the Living God, I really am at a loss to discover the divisions which are so loudly proclaimed. It strikes me that the tokens of union are much more prominent than the tokens of division.

But what are they? First there is a union *in judgment* upon all vital matters. I converse with a spiritual man, and no matter what he calls himself, when we talk of sin, pardon, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and such like themes, we are agreed. We speak of our blessed Lord. My friend says that Jesus is fair and lovely, so say I. He says that he has nothing else to trust to but the precious blood, nor have I anything beside. I tell him that I find myself a poor, weak creature, he laments the same. I live in his house a little while, we pray together at the family altar, you could not tell which it was that prayed, Calvinist or Arminian, we pray so exactly alike, and when we open the hymn book, very likely if he happens to be a Wesleyan he chooses to sing, "Jesus, lover of my soul." I will sing it, and then next morning he will sing with me, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me." If the Spirit of God be in us, we are all agreed upon great points.

Let me say that among true saints the points of union, even in matters of judgment are ninety-nine, and the points of difference are only as one. In *experiential points*, as face answers to face, so does the heart of man to man. Only get upon experiential topics concerning soul-dealings with God, leave the letter and get to the spirit, crack the shells and eat the kernel of spiritual truth, and you will find that the points of agreement between genuine Christians are something marvelous.

But this union is to be seen most plainly in union of *heart*. I am told that Christians do not love each other. I am very sorry if that be true, but I rather doubt it, for I suspect that those who do not love each other are not Christians. Where the Spirit of God is there must be love, and if I have once known and recognized any man to be my brother in Christ Jesus, the love of Christ constrains me no more to think of him as a stranger or foreigner, but a fellow citizen with the saints.

Now I hate High Churchism as my soul hates Satan, but I love George Herbert, although George Herbert is a desperately High Churchman. I hate his High Churchism, but I love George Herbert from my very soul, and I have a warm corner in my heart for every man who is like him. Let me find a man

who loves my Lord Jesus Christ as George Herbert did, and I do not ask myself whether I shall love him or not, there is no room for question, for I cannot help myself, unless I can leave off loving Jesus Christ, I cannot cease loving those who love Him. Here is George Fox, the Quaker, a strange sort of body it is true, going about the world making much noise and stir, but I love the man with all my soul, because he had an awful respect for the presence of God, and an intense love for everything spiritual. How is it that I cannot help loving George Herbert and George Fox, who are in some things complete opposites? Because they both loved the Master.

I will defy you, if you have any love to Jesus Christ, to pick or choose among His people, you may hate as much as you will the shells in which the pearls lie, and the dross with which the gold is mixed, but the true, the precious blood-bought gold, the true pearl, heaven-dyed, you must esteem. You must love a spiritual man find him wherever you may. Such love does exist among the people of God, and if anybody says it does not, I can only fear that the speaker is unfit to judge. If I come across a man in whom there is the Spirit of Christ, I *must* love him, and if I did not I should prove I was not in the unity at all.

Oneness in judgment, in experience and heart are some of the evidences of this union, but if you want more plain and palpable union, which even carnal eyes can see, note the unity of Christian *prayer*. Oh, how slight the difference there! Well-taught believers address the throne of grace in the same style, whatever may be the particular form which their church organization may have assumed. So is it with *praise*. There, indeed, we are as one, and our music goes up with sweet accord to the throne of the heavenly grace.

Beloved, we are one in action, true Christians anywhere are all doing the same work. Here is a brother preaching, I do not care about that white thing he has on, but if he be a genuine Christian, he is preaching Christ crucified, and here am I, and he may not like me because I have not that white rag on, but still I delight to preach Christ crucified. When you come to the real lifework of the Christian, it is the same in every case, it is holding up the cross of Christ. "Oh," say you, "but there are many Christians in the world preaching this and that and the other." I am saying nothing of them or about them, I am saying nothing about their ecclesiastical belongings, I am saying nothing about those who merely cling to the church, I am speaking of the elect, the precious ones, the simpleminded Christ-taught men and women, and their motive of action is the same, and there is among them a true union, which is the answer to our Lord's prayer. He did not plead in vain, what He sought He has obtained, and the truly quickened are this day one, and shall evermore remain so.

I think I hear someone saying, "But I cannot see this unity." My answer is, One reason may be because of your want of information. I saw a large building the other day being erected, I do not know that it was any business of mine, but I did puzzle myself to make out how that would make a complete structure, it seemed to me that the gables would come in so very awkwardly. But I dare say if I had seen a plan there might have been some central tower or some combination by which the wings, one of which appeared to be rather longer than the other, might have been brought into harmony, for the architect doubtless had a unity in his mind which I had not in mine. So you and I have not the necessary information as to what the church is to be.

The unity of the church is not to be seen by you today—do not think it, the plan is not worked out yet. God is building over yonder, and you only see the foundation, in another part the topstone is all but ready, and you cannot comprehend it. Shall the Master show you His plan? Is the Divine Architect bound to take you into His studio to show you all His secret motives and designs? Not so, wait awhile and you will find that all these diversities and differences among spiritually-minded men, when the master plan comes to be wrought out, are different parts of the grand whole, and you with the astonished world will then know that God has sent the Lord Jesus.

I go into a great factory, there is a wheel spinning away in that way perfectly indifferent and careless of every other wheel, there is another wheel going in an opposite direction, all sorts of motions concentric and eccentric, and I say, "What an extraordinary muddle this all seems!" Just so! I do not

understand the machinery. So when I go into the great visible church of God, if I look with the eyes of my spirit I can see the inner harmony, but if with these eyes I look upon the great outward church I cannot see it, nor will it ever be seen till the hidden church shall be made manifest at the appearing of the Lord.

The reason why you do not see the unity of the church may be because of the present roughness of the material. See yonder a number of stones—here, a number of trees, I cannot see the unity. Of course not. When these trees are all cut into planks, when these stones are all squared, then you may begin to see them as a whole. The various stones of the divine building of the church are all out of shape at present, they are not polished. We shall never be one till we are sanctified. The unity of Christ is a unity of holy, not unholy beings, and as we each of us grow more and more prepared by the work of Christ for our own place, we shall discover more and more the unity of the church.

Perhaps, too, let me say, we cannot see the unity of the church because we ourselves cannot see anything. Is that a harsh saying? Who can bear it? There are thousands of professors who cannot see anything. Do not suppose, dear friends, that the unity of the church is a thing that is to be seen by these eyes of ours. Never! Everything spiritual is spiritually discerned. You must get spiritual eyes before you can see it. Many people say there is no unity. I would be astonished if there were any which they could see or feel. They are not in Christ themselves, their hearts have never felt what spiritual life means, how should they be able to understand that into which they have never entered?

See what carnal-mindedness does with Christ's teaching. Christ teaches His people that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. Says Carnal-mind, "I know what that means," and straightway he runs to the pantry, and brings out a loaf of bread and a cup of wine. Spiritual men weep at such ignorance. Jesus says, "That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me." "I know what that means," says Carnal-mind, "They are all to worship after the same fashion, and use the same ritual." That is all poor Carnal-mind knows about it, he confounds the outward with the inward, and misses the Lord's meaning. But, beloved, you know better than this. You do know, I trust, and feel this very day in your soul that the true saints of the living God are one with each other at this very moment, and that they recognize and discover this unity in proportion as they become like their Lord and Master, and are conformed to His image, and made fit for the place which they are to occupy.

Just as Professor Owen can take up a bone, and from that one bone can discover the whole structure of the entire animal, I do not doubt but what there is a mutual dependence and consistency between every Christian and his fellows, so that if we understood the science of spiritual comparative anatomy, as we may do in heaven, we would be able to form from any one Christian the fashion of the entire church of God, from the mutual dependence of one upon the other, but it would not be according to the fashion of the beast that was, and now is, and is yet to come, which calls itself the church of Christ, and is nothing better than Antichrist, it would take the fashion of the Lord from heaven, of whose body we are members.

II. I have talked too long upon this matter of unity to spare much time for the other points, and therefore only a hint at them. The second head was to be, **THE WORK THAT IS TO BE DONE BEFORE THIS UNITY CAN BE COMPLETE.**

There are many chosen ones who have not yet believed in Jesus Christ, and the church cannot be one till these are saved. Here is work to be done—work to be done by instruments. These chosen ones are to believe—that is a work of grace, but they are to believe through our word. Brethren, if you would promote the unity of Christ's church, look after His lost sheep, seek out wandering souls. If you ask what is to be your word, the answer is in the text—it is to be concerning Christ. They are to believe in Him. Every soul that believes in Christ is built into the great Gospel unity in its measure, and you will never see the church as a whole while there is one soul left unsaved for whom the Savior shed His precious blood.

Go out and teach His Word! Tell of the doctrines of grace as He has given you ability. Hold up Christ before the eyes of men, and you will be the means in God's hand of bringing them to believe in

Him, and so the church shall be built up and made one. Here is work for the beginning of the year, here is work till the end of the year. Do not sit down and scheme and plot and plan how this denomination may melt into the other, you leave that alone. Your business now is to go and—

***“Tell to sinners round
What a Savior you have found,”***

for that is God’s way of using you to complete the unity of His church. Unless these be saved, the church is not perfect.

That is a wonderful text that, “They without us cannot be made perfect.” That is to say, saints in heaven cannot be perfect unless *we* get there. What! the blessed saints in heaven not perfect except the rest of believers come there? So the Scripture tells us, for they would be a part of the body and not a whole body, they cannot be perfect as a flock unless the rest of the sheep come there. They beckon us from the battlements of heaven and say to us, “Come up hither, for without you we cannot be one as Jesus Christ is one with His Father. We are an imperfect body till you come.” And we from our position of grace turn round to the sinful world and we say to the chosen of God from among that sinful world, “Come to Jesus! Trust Jesus! Believe in Him! for without you we cannot be perfect, nor can the heavenly ones themselves be, for there must be one complete church! The city must be walled all round, and if there is one gap in the wall the city will not be one. Come, then, put your trust in Jesus, that His church may be one.”

III. The third point was to be, HERE IS PRAYER OFFERED.

Beloved, Christ prays for the unity of His church, that all saints who have gone to heaven in days gone by, that all saints who live now, that all who ever live may be brought into the unity of the one life in Himself. We do not attach enough importance to the power of Christ’s prayer I fear. We think of Joshua fighting in the valley, but we forget our Moses with hands outstretched upon the hill. We are looking at the wheels of the machine—to go back to our old figure—and we are thinking that this wheel, and that, and the other, is wanting more oil, or not working exactly to its point. Ah, but let us never forget the engine, that mysterious motive force which is hidden and concealed, upon which the action of the whole depends.

Christ’s prayer for His people is the great motive force by which the Spirit of God is sent to us, and the whole church is kept filled with life, and the whole of that force is tending to this one thing—to unity, it is removing everything which keeps us from being one, it is working with all its divine omnipotence to bring us into a visible unity when Christ shall stand in the latter days upon the earth. Beloved, let us have hope for sinners yet unconverted, Christ is praying for them. Let us have hope for the entire body of the faithful, Christ is praying for their unity, and what He prays for must be effected, He never pleads in vain, He prays that the church may be one, and it is one, He prays that they may be perfect and complete, and it shall be amidst eternal hallelujahs.

IV. Then, there was THE RESULT ANTICIPATED FROM THE WHOLE, “That the world may believe that you have sent me.”

The effect of sight of the complete church upon human minds will be overwhelming. Angels and principalities will look at Christ’s perfect church with awe. They will all exclaim, “What a marvel! what a wonder! what a masterpiece of Divine power and wisdom!” When they saw the foundation laid in the precious blood of Christ, they gazed long and wistfully, but when they see the whole church complete, every spire and pinnacle, and the great topstone brought out with shouting, all built of precious jewels and pearls, fashioned like the similitude of a palace, why they will make heaven ring again and again. When the world was made they sang for joy, but how shall the vaults of heaven echo when the church is all complete and the new creation shall have been perfected!

What will be the effect upon men? Astonishment will be the effect upon angels, but what upon men? Why the world, that wicked world which rejected Christ, that wicked crucifying world which would

have none of Him and which now will have none of His people, that wicked world which hates His saints and has strived with all its might to pluck down the walls of His church, will believe, will be compelled to believe that God has sent His Son. They will bite their tongues with rage, they will gnash their teeth with horror, but there will be no doubt about it.

Do not suppose that the world will ever be convinced so as to believe in Christ, and to be saved by the unity of the church. It is not anticipated in this chapter that the world ever will be saved. That is not dreamed of the whole chapter through—the world is spoken of as something for which Christ does not pray, whose enlightenment is not anticipated, but that world, though it weeps, and wails, and curses, and abhors, shall be made distinctly to recognize the divinity of Christ's mission when it shall see the entire unity of the church.

Why, before my astonished gaze this morning, there seems to me to rise up as from a great sea of confusion a wondrous building. I see the first stone sunk into the depths of that sea dyed with blood, and I see the top of it just emerging above lofty waves of strife and confusion, and now I see other stones built on that, all of them dyed with blood—the first apostles, all of them martyrs. I see stone rising upon stone as age succeeds age. At first nearly all the foundations are laid in the fair vermilion of martyrdom, but the structure rises, the stones are very different, they come from Asia, Africa, America, Europe, they are taken from among princes and from among peasants.

These stones are very diverse. Perhaps while they were here they scarcely recognized that they belonged to the same building, but there they are, and for one thousand eight hundred and sixty years that building goes on, and on, and on building, every stone being made ready, we know not how many more years that masterly edifice will take, but at the last, despite all the frowns of hell and all the power of devils, that edifice will be completed, not a single stone being lost, not one elect child of God being absent, and not one of those stones having suffered any injury nor been put out of its place, and the whole so fair, so matchless, such a display of power and wisdom and love, that even the hateful ones whose hearts are hard as adamant against the Most High will be compelled to say God must have sent Christ—they cannot restrain that confession when all the church shall be one as the Father is one with Christ. O happy day! Dawn on our eyes and make us to be blessed.

V. The concluding suggestion was to be this, ARE WE PARTS OF THAT GREAT UNITY?

There is the question. It is not this morning, Are you members of a Christian church? "I know how you get at it," you say, "Well, a certain number of churches are evangelical and orthodox, they make up orthodox Protestantism. Now, I am a Baptist. Very well. I am a Baptist, and the Baptist churches are orthodox, therefore I am a Christian. I am an Episcopalian, and Episcopacy is one branch of Protestantism. Very well, I am a Protestant, I am a Christian." Ah, that is your carnal way of talking. You may be very grievously mistaken if that is your argument. But if you can go another way to work and say, "I have received eternal life for I have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I am given of the Father unto Him." Why then, beloved, you come at it directly.

Being one with Christ, you are one with His people, but do you when you are looking for this unity look not for an outward but for an inward thing. Do not look for a matter that is to be written on sheets of paper, on rolls and books, but look for a bond written on hearts, and consciences, and souls. Do not be looking for all saints in one room, but in Christ, all living upon heavenly bread, and drinking of the wines on the lees well refined that come from Christ Jesus. Look for a spiritual union and you will find it, if you look for the other thing you will not find it, and if you did find it, it would be a great and awful thing, from which you might pray God to deliver His church.

As spiritual men, look for spiritual unity, but first begin by asking whether you are spiritual yourselves. Have you been born into the family? Have you been washed with the blood? Have you passed from death unto life? for if not, even if you could be in the body you would be as a dead substance in the body working a fester, a gangrene, necessitating pain and suffering, you would be a thing accursed, to be cast away. But are you alive by the life of Christ? Does God dwell in you, and do

you dwell in Him? Then, my dear brother, give me your hand. Never mind about a thousand differences if you are in Christ and I am in Christ, we cannot be two, we must be one.

Let us love each other with a pure heart fervently. Let us live on earth, as those who are to live together a long eternity in heaven. Let us help each other's spiritual growth. Let us aid each other as far as possible in every holy, spiritual enterprise, which is for the promotion of the kingdom of the Lord, and let us chase out of our hearts everything which would break the unity which God has established. Let us cast from us every false doctrine, every false thought of pride, of enmity, of envy, of bitterness, that we whom God has made one may be one before men, as well as before the eye of the heart-searching God.

May the Lord bless us, dear friends, as a church, make us one, and keep us so, for it will be the dead stuff among us that will make the divisions. It is the living children of God that make the unity, it is the living ones that are bound together. There will be no fear about that—Christ's prayer takes care of us, that we shall be one. As for those of you who are joined with us in visible fellowship, and are not one with Christ, may the Lord save you with His great salvation, and His shall be the praise. Amen and Amen.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.